

# STATE SENATOR . MICHAEL PRUSI . 38TH DISTRICT

# Prusi Press Release

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## **PRUSI OFFERS AMMENDMENTS TO PREVENT NEWBERRY CLOSURE**

*Senate Republicans block attempt to save local jobs, invest in public safety*

(Lansing)— Republican members of the Senate Appropriations Committee blocked efforts by Senator Mike Prusi (D-Ishpeming) to prevent the closure of Newberry Correctional Facility. Last week in subcommittee, Senate Republicans proposed closing the facility over a more costly, less efficient facility in Lake County. Sen. Prusi's amendments were offered to bring the focus of the budget process back to effective government.

"I'm disappointed that my Republican colleagues would rather fund inefficient facilities over investing in public safety," said Sen. Prusi. "As elected officials, we have a responsibility to taxpayers to use their dollars efficiently."

Newberry's proposed closure is counter to the non-partisan Auditor General, Department of Corrections, and Governor's recommendation, which calls for the closure of the private youth facility in Lake County. In 1999, Sen. Prusi, as a House member, opposed the opening of the Lake County facility because previous efforts to privatize state facilities had not produced savings and showed a lack of accountability. Over the years, the facility has shown improper management, including the mistreatment of minors, and failed to comply with its state contract. To date, the facility still fails to meet its obligation to Michigan taxpayers.

The amendments offered by Senator Prusi today would have preserved funding for Newberry Correctional facility and required the state to conduct an impact study of its closure on the local community. The proposed closure would not only result in lost jobs, but would mean decreased enrollment in local schools and have a direct impact on the local tax base.

"We still have a long way to go in this budget process," said Sen. Prusi. "I promise to hold my colleagues accountable and continue our fight to save the jobs in Newberry."

Sen. Prusi will be sending a letter to the chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Judiciary and Corrections, Senator Alan Cropsey (D-Dewitt), asking for a special subcommittee meeting allowing input from Luce County officials, taxpayers, and facility employees.

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*Mike Prusi serves as Democratic Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. He represents the 38<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which includes 13 of the 15 Upper Peninsula counties.*